# Call for Government action on alcohol product marketing ​

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We all want our families and communities to be healthy and safe, but right now far too many families and communities are experiencing harm from alcohol. Alcohol-induced deaths are at their highest rate in a decade,¹ and there are increases in people being hospitalised and seeking treatment for alcohol use.²

There is strong evidence that exposure to alcohol marketing increases the likelihood that children will start drinking alcohol at an earlier age and at higher risk levels.³

This is why we need to do all we can to ensure that children are not exposed to alcohol marketing or targeted by alcohol companies.

After almost four months, and following a number of community complaints and Parliamentarians calling for action, the alcohol industry’s own Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC) Scheme has admitted that an alcoholic product based on a popular soft drink has been designed to appeal to children.⁴ This comes after ABAC already provided pre-approval for the product’s marketing.

Asahi has known that there was community concern over their product, but instead of taking action, the company started rolling it out on tap in pubs, showing it has no concern about the complaints that have been raised via ABAC. Asahi also had no regard for the fact that the product is being promoted prolifically through TikTok by young Australians, who are sharing videos about how the product masks the taste of alcohol and appeals to young people.⁵

In practice, ABAC’s acknowledgement that this alcoholic product appeals to children in its design does nothing to address the fundamental issue with how alcoholic products are marketed in Australia.

Advertising and marketing of addictive products that cause substantial harm, including the design of their packaging, should be required to follow Government-led rules that protect our children, families and broader community.

For more than 20 years, the alcohol industry has largely set its own rules for advertising through the voluntary ABAC Scheme. The rules the industry has developed for itself are weak and littered with loopholes.⁶ Community complaints are often dismissed, and even when breaches are upheld, there are no consequences. Companies like Asahi are left to themselves to decide what action, if any, to take.

The failures and fundamental flaws of the ABAC Scheme continue to leave our community at risk of harm from alcohol marketing.

The ABAC Scheme is completely voluntary, with no legislative basis for holding alcohol companies accountable for their marketing practices.

The Australian community wants change.

Seventy five percent of Australians agree that alcohol companies should not be able to set their own rules for how they advertise alcohol.⁷

We, the undersigned, call for Government-led regulation of alcohol marketing in Australia that is independent of the alcohol industry – a comprehensive legislative framework with enforcement measures that effectively stop harmful alcohol marketing.

It’s time to put the health and wellbeing of our families and communities first.

Sincerely,

**Ms Caterina Giorgi**CEO, Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education

**Dr Erin Lalor**CEO, Alcohol and Drug Foundation

**Ms Hannah Pierce**
Executive Officer, Alcohol Change Australia

**Ms Louise Gray**
CEO, NOFASD Australia

**Dr Tanya Buchanan**CEO, Cancer Council Australia

**Mr Scott Wilson**
CEO, Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council South Australia

**Adjunct Professor Terry Slevin**Chief Executive Officer, Public Health Association of Australia

**Ms Melinda Edmunds**President, Australian Health Promotion Association

**Ms Nicole Higgins**President, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

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CEO, Sober in the Country

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Development Coordinator, Alcohol and Other Drug Consumer & Community Coalition

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Director, Health Promotion and Behaviour Change, The George Institute for Global Health

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## Join our community

Will you join the community taking action on alcohol?